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# Soldiers

FEBRUARY 2009 • VOLUME 64, NO. 2



A group of wounded warriors and fellow bikers pedal along a Camp Joseph T. Robinson street, Nov. 6, 2008, during the central Arkansas portion of the Wounded Warrior Project Soldier Ride. (Photo by Capt. Chris Heathscott)



## [ On the Cover ]

Soldiers magazine sports 2009 montage by David Vergun using photos featured in this month's issue.

## [ Coming Next Month ]

March 2009 - Women's history

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▲ (Top photo) Army top fuel driver Tony "The Sarge" Schumacher powers his land rocket down the track. See page 34 for more. (Photo by J.D. Leipold)

◀ Staff Sgt. Jason Seifert, a member of The Old Guard, meets with Washington Nationals pitcher Jason Bergmann prior to throwing the first pitch at the start of a June 7, 2008, game with the San Francisco Giants at Nationals Park, Washington, D.C. (Photo by C. Todd Lopez)





# SOLDIERS MEDIA CENTER



## We Want Your Story

The Army is our nation's greatest resource in defense of our homeland. Every day Soldiers and civilians perform acts of valor. The heroic acts performed on the battlefield and the acts of kindness from humanitarian efforts demonstrate the strength of the Army. We want to tell your story. To find out how the Soldiers Media Center can tell your story, contact your unit public affairs officer or send your submissions via e-mail to:

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## Soldiers

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Thomas Jefferson Awards  
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NAGC Blue Pencil  
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2004

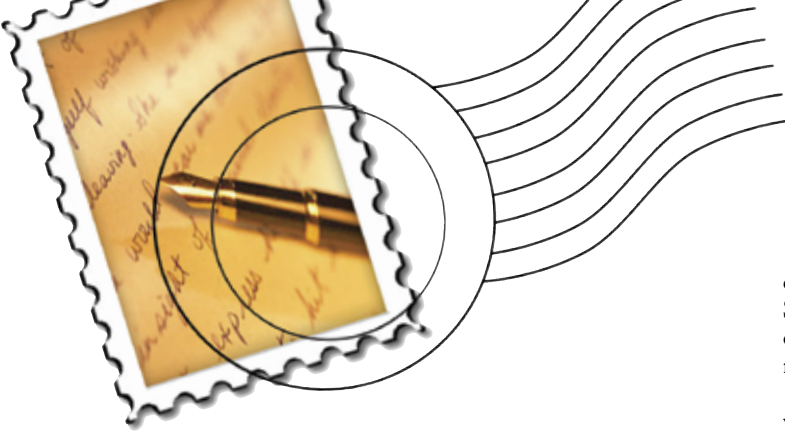


Thomas Jefferson Awards  
Outstanding Flagship Writer  
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Heike Hasenauer



# MAILCALL

Letters from the field



## **June Soldiers highlighted important issues**

Your response to the "name withheld" about marriage in the military was very good. We need more programs for the military family and the single, active-duty servicemembers. If you don't take care of the "home front," then you lose when the active duty goes "TAD/TDY." I'm retired Air Force, and without the programs that the overseas as well as mainland stations had for their military families, our military wouldn't be what it is today! These programs are much needed, and maybe if this "name withheld" person went overseas or even joined the ranks of our Brave, then he may realize how important these services are.

I also enjoyed your articles on Korea—so much to do and see there. They highlighted how important it is for us to be a strong unit (Army, Air Force and Navy) there working with the ROK Army. Maybe "name withheld" needs to go there, then they may understand what we are talking about.

Keep up the good work, Soldiers magazine.



## **Retired Air Force Staff Sgt. Michael Widner**

I would like to react to a letter published in your August 2008 issue by a person stating that talking about marriage and family in the Army was an "in vogue, touchy-feely topic."

For years marriage and family was thought to be a private matter that no one should get involved with, leaving the Soldiers and their spouses to struggle alone with the burden of that responsibility. From personal experience as a married Soldier deployed to Iraq for over a year, I can tell you that knowing that my family had access to help through the services provided by the Army gave me enough peace of mind to concentrate and conduct my mission.

Even now in garrison, the awareness that the Army and married Soldiers have about the important role of the family in mission accomplishment has a great impact in training, because we know that our families are never alone.

## **1st Lt. Rolando Medina-Fonseca**

### **Soldiers needs more photos by Soldiers**

I've always enjoyed your magazine and how it highlights what the Army is doing and who is doing it. My only beef is that you're not always relying on Army photographers to do it (ex. Frontlines, September issue).

As an Army combat cameraman with the 55th Signal Company deployed in Iraq, I, as well as my fellow combat

camera Soldiers take hundreds of excellent photos here daily. Some of which are museum-quality. We capture not only our people doing the mission every day, but the Iraqis as they rebuild their nation.

So of all the hundreds of pictures we produce every day, why would the one picture highlighting what we're doing in the combat zone come from an Air Force photographer? Not that I'm knocking that individual's skills, but shouldn't Army photography take center stage in an ARMY magazine? Priority should go to us first.

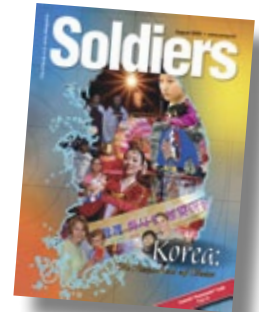
Let's keep Soldiers Magazine "in house." Every Airman magazine I've ever seen didn't have Army photographers' work in it.

**Staff Sgt. Brian D. Lehnhardt**  
3rd Plt., 55th Signal Company (Combat Camera)  
Currently deployed to Iraq

## **Fond memories of Korea**

Your recent articles on Korea have been bringing me back to the year I served in Korea in 2001. Even seven years ago, Korea was an amazing tour. Now with all the changes the Army has been making to make it an assignment of choice, I know life over there is even better. From the food, the people, the shopping, the environment and the culture, Korea offers so much to experience.

I am now in the National Guard so being stationed in Korea will probably never happen again, but I want to thank you for bringing back all the good memories of my year in Korea.



**Staff Sgt. Ana Bolaños**

## **Soldiers Values Your Opinion**

*To comment, keep your remarks to under 150 words, include your name, rank and address, and send them to: **Defense Media Activity, Crystal City, Attn: Editor, Soldiers Magazine, Box 31, 2511 Jefferson Davis Hwy., Arlington, VA 22202-3900** or email: [assignmentdesk@smc.army.mil](mailto:assignmentdesk@smc.army.mil)*

## **November 2008 Soldiers magazine correction**

In the article titled "Star wars training for downrange action," a unit was misidentified on page 17. The opposing force unit was named as 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment. The unit was actually 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment.

Soldiers magazine staff apologizes for the error.

## **December 2008 Soldiers magazine correction**

In the article titled "Honoring servicemembers one stitch at a time," Rod Raubeson's email address was incorrect. His correct email address is: [grunt\\_lcp160@yahoo.com](mailto:grunt_lcp160@yahoo.com)

Soldiers magazine staff apologizes for the error.

# Nailing Olympic gold in skeet

Story & photos by Tim Hipps



**U**.S. Army Marksmanship Unit shotgun shooter Pfc. Vincent Hancock set two Olympic records and prevailed in a four-target shoot-off against Norway's Tore Brovold to win the gold medal in men's skeet at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.

"Hooah," Hancock said after receiving several congratulatory hugs from coaches and teammates. "This is the best feeling in the world. It's awesome."

In skeet, shooters move through a semicircular range featuring eight shooting stations. At each station, targets are thrown at least 65 meters from the high (10 feet) or low (3 feet) house on either side of the range at 55 miles per hour. Competitors hold their 12-gauge shotguns at hip level until the target appears and can fire only one shot per target.

Hancock shot an Olympic record 121 of a possible 125 targets in five qualification rounds and took a one-target lead into the final.

During the final, Hancock missed his 20th shot and finished regulation tied at 145 with Brovold, who shot a perfect round to force the shoot-off.

"It made me more determined," Hancock said of missing the low target flying out of the sixth station. "Sometimes I need something to boost my determination to get to that next level, and that's what hap-

U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit shotgun shooter Pfc. Vincent Hancock, 19, of Eatonton, Ga., sets two Olympic records and prevails in a four-shot shoot-off with Norway's Tore Brovold to win the men's skeet competition, Aug. 16, at the Beijing Shooting Range.



pened. I would have liked to have shot 25 and won the gold outright, but I couldn't have asked for a better shoot-off."

Brovold drew from a hat to determine who would shoot first in the extra session and aligned the stars for Hancock.

"I actually like going last," said Hancock, who got his wish. "I was hoping that he was going to draw first in the shoot-off. I like shooting second just so I can have the pressure on myself and not have to put the pressure on anybody else.

"I like to deal with the pressure, and this time it paid off."

Both of the co-world record-holders hit their first two targets in the extra session, but Brovold missed one of his next pair.

Hancock then stepped up and knocked down two targets to clinch the gold with a final score of 145 (+4). Brovold finished at 145 (+3) to win the silver medal.

"I was hoping that he wouldn't miss because Tore and I are really good friends, but when it comes down to it, I'm glad I got the gold medal," Hancock said.

"I couldn't ask to shoot against a better shooter," Hancock said. "He's right there among the best in the world. It was just which one of us had the better day today, and it turned out to be me."

Likewise, Brovold tipped his cap to Hancock.

"It was a very close final," Brovold said. "I knew that if I was going to have a chance for the gold, I needed to hit 25, maybe 26. Vincent is a great shooter and a great friend, but I don't see the silver as a failure. I won the silver."

Hancock stayed poised on the mission throughout the two-day event.

"I was trying to keep everything out of my mind, actually," he said. "I was just trying to keep it focused on the gold medal and seeing myself up on the podium in the first place. Just visualizing perfection—and I almost had it. I missed the low six again, but it doesn't matter, I still won.

"I could feel the nervousness

building up inside of me so I hoped it wasn't taking too much longer," added Hancock, who couldn't wait to celebrate with his wife, mother and father, who all made the trip to China. "I'm obviously a very nervous person. I can't sit still very often. I pace around when I'm shooting. That helps me calm down. I try to take the anxiousness and nervousness and turn it around into energy that I can focus on my shooting.

"My game plan was just to break every target," he said. "I can't ask for anything more than perfection. I try to be a perfectionist as much as possible because my motto is, 'If you're perfect, nobody can beat you,' so perfection rules.

"It's swirling around in my head right now still. It won't sink in for a couple of days probably, but once it does, it's going to be awesome."

Hancock was born in Port Charlotte, Fla., and began shooting at age 8. Before his 11th birthday, he was shooting competitively. At age 16, he began rewriting the skeet record books.

Before graduating in 2006 from Gatewood High School in Georgia, Hancock joined the Army and completed Basic Training at Fort Sill, Okla. Later that year, he was named International Sports Federation Shooter of the Year and Shooter

of the Year by USA Shooting, the sport's governing body in the United States.

Hancock, who was assigned to the USAMU in November of 2007, established the skeet world record with a perfect score of 150 at a World Cup event in Lonato, Italy, on June 14, 2007. He also won the bronze medal at the 2007 World Championships and was named Shotgun Shooter of the Year by USA Shooting.

"This is a dream come true," Hancock said. "All those things were just stepping stones to this point right now."

Brovold equaled Hancock's world record last month at a World Cup event in Nicosia, Cyprus. Hancock saluted the USAMU for preparing him to compete with the world's best skeet shooters.

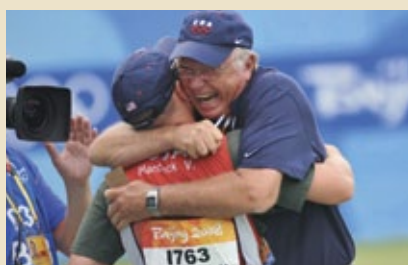
"I couldn't have done it without the Army Marksmanship Unit," Hancock said. "They help me define my abilities and my training methods by allowing me to train with the best in the United States. I couldn't ask for anything better. They provide me with everything I need: shells, targets and time. They've really let me move along in my game."

USAMU Soldiers conduct train-the-trainer events at Fort Benning, Ga., where they train sergeants and noncommissioned officers to better prepare their units for deployments.

"We're helping save American lives by teaching the Soldiers what to do in situations that they may need experience with," said Hancock, who has no intention of resting on his Olympic laurels.

"I'll just go back home and start training again," he said. "I've got a few more matches left this year. I'll try to come out on top of those and hit it back hard training for next season. It's not over. I want more medals.

"I love shooting and I just want to keep competing. Being out here shooting with my friends from all the different countries, you can't beat that. With the camaraderie of all the people that shoot here, it's one of the best sports in the world." **sm**



(Top) Team USA shotgun coach Lloyd Woodhouse, a retired Airman, hugs Pfc. Vincent Hancock after he wins the Olympic gold medal in men's skeet, Aug. 16, at the Beijing Shooting Range. (Bottom) Olympic skeet gold medal winner Hancock (center), is flanked by silver medalist Tore Brovold (left) of Norway and bronze medalist Anthony Terras of Italy on the podium in Beijing.

Tim Hipps works for FMWRC Public Affairs



# Double Trap

## Olympic Gold

# Double Record

Story & photos by Tim Hipps



U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit shotgun shooter Spc. Walton Glenn Eller III prepares and then takes his final shot that secured a gold medal and established an Olympic record total of 190 in double trap, Aug. 12, in Beijing. He then raises his hands in victory.

**U**.S. Army Marksmanship Unit Spc. Walton Glenn Eller III set two Olympic records en route to winning a gold medal in double trap at the August event in Beijing. USAMU teammate Spc. Jeffrey Holguin finished fourth in the event.

Eller's score of 145 in the qualification rounds eclipsed the previous Olympic record of 144, set in the 2004 Athens Games.

In double trap, competitors fire their 12-gauge shotguns from five adjacent shooting stations. At each station, two targets are thrown simultaneously from an underground bunker

at speeds up to 50 miles per hour at set angles and height. The targets are thrown with a variable delay of up to one second and competitors get one shot per target.

"I realized with my last pair to go, 'Oh, the Olympic record is only 144. If I hit my last pair, I'm going to get the Olympic record.'"

When Eller did that, he sensed that he was on his way to a spectacular day. He missed his first two targets in the final, but settled down and missed only three shots the rest of the way.

"If you shoot the Olympic record (in qualification rounds) and you've

got a little bit of a lead, you expect to come out with gold," Eller said. "But after I went out there (in the final) and missed that first pair, it was a little dicey there for a second, but I brought it all back together."

Eller's final score was 190.

"It's incredible," said Eller, 26, a native of Katy, Texas, who is stationed at Fort Benning, Ga. "I finally made a final in the Olympics. I came in like 12th (in Sydney) and 17th (in Athens), and finally came out and put a good day together. This was the only thing I was worried about for the last two years."

Explaining his key to success,



Eller reached into his vest and revealed a handful of baseball cards.

“Hard work,” he said as he shuffled cards featuring Soldiers of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit. “That, and I had my teammates with me. The military has been great to me. They’ve helped me fulfill a dream that, without them, I don’t think would’ve ever happened. I owe everything to them.

“Joining the Army was an incredible gain for me. It gave me a lot of discipline. I was fortunate enough to go into the Army Marksmanship Unit. It’s great having those guys to train with every day. They really pushed me along. Just working with them all day, every day, it keeps you in it.”

Eller said he could not wait to give his parents a big bear hug.

“I’m going to go find my parents and celebrate,” he said. “They’ve been here all week and to the last two Olympics watching me. To have them here and to finally win a gold medal for them is incredible.”

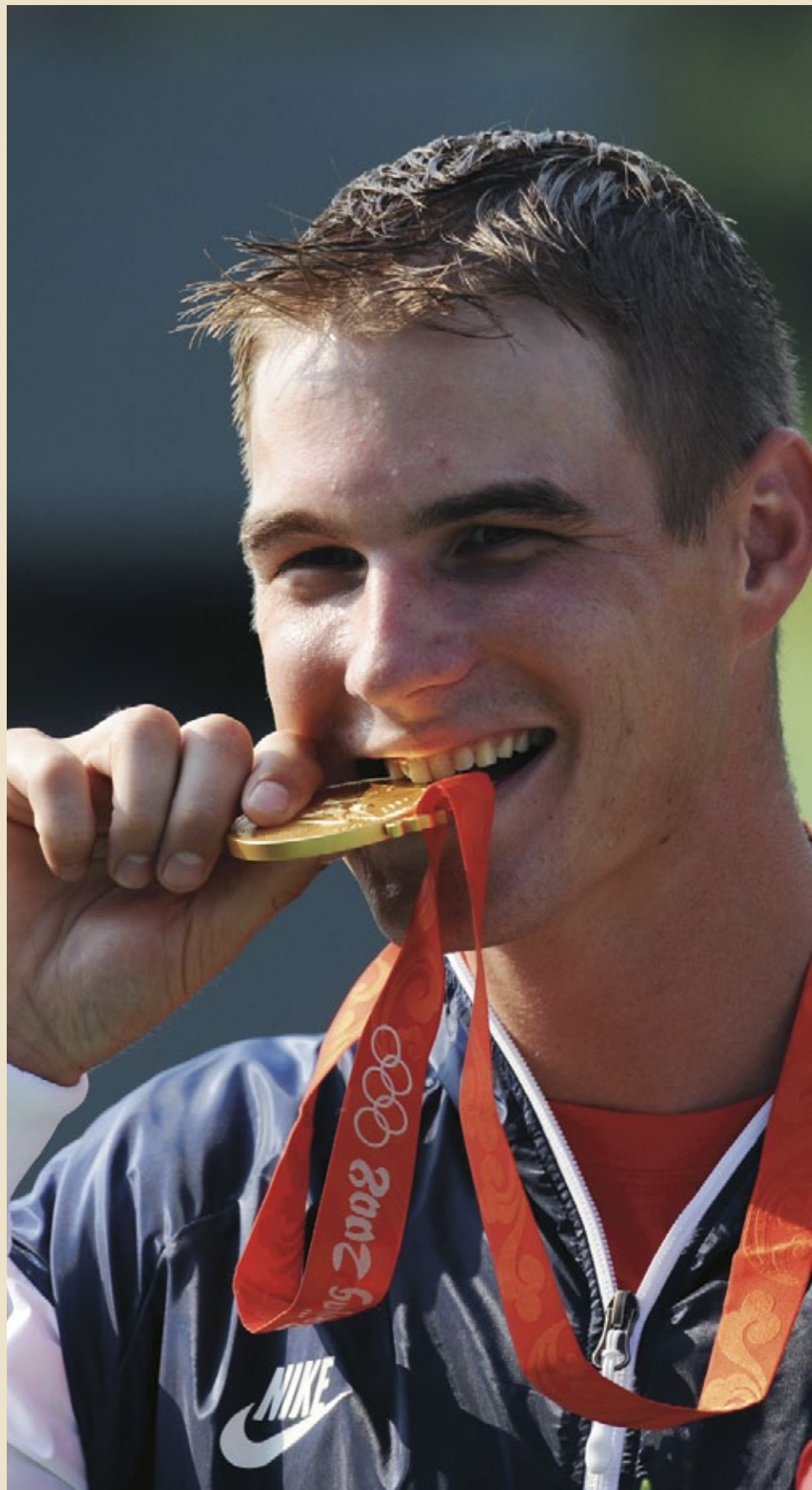
Holguin, 29, of Yorba Linda, Calif., finished fourth with a 182 total.

“I shot really well today, until the final,” Holguin said. “This game is all about putting four good rounds together, and honestly, I could only manage two. I had a mediocre round and a bad round. So when you’ve got two good rounds, they don’t offset the mediocre and bad rounds.

On this day, Holguin tipped his cap to Eller.

“It’s all about him now,” Holguin said. “Glenn Eller and I started shooting against each other a long, long time ago, and we actually enlisted in the Army together in the fall of 2006. This was half of our goal. We wanted gold and silver at the Olympics. We came really close, but I’m happy for him.”

During the competition, Holguin did not pull any punches for his Army teammate. “When we’re out on the shooting line, we take the gloves off and go at it as hard as anybody else,” Holguin said. **sm**



Spc. Walton Glenn Eller III of the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, Ga., bites his Olympic gold medal after winning the double trap event, Aug. 12, at the Beijing Shooting Range.

# A WRESTLER'S QUEST

Story & photos by Tim Hipps



Staff Sgt. Dremiel Byers wrestles to a 1-1, 2-0 victory over Oleksandr Chernetskyi of Ukraine in their opening match of the Olympic Greco-Roman 120-kilogram tournament.



**A**FTER being eliminated from the quarterfinals of the Olympic Greco-Roman 120-kilogram wrestling tournament, Staff Sgt. Dremiel Byers vowed to continue his quest for the Olympic medal at the 2012 London Games.

"Today, I was supposed to be getting a medal for my grandfather," Byers said. "I guarantee if he was still alive, I would call him and tell him what happened today and he would probably say, 'Well, I won my bowling tournament,' whether he did it or not.

"I think about that. He wanted me to know one of us was winning, so I still owe him."

Byers opened the tournament in Beijing with a 1-0, 2-1 victory over Ukraine's Oleksandr Chernetskyi.

"I just came out and tried to work a few things and it worked out," Byers said. "I was able to score."

In his second match, Byers faced China's Deli Liu, who seemed even larger than a 6-foot-8 heavyweight with the support of the 'home crowd' packed inside the China Agricultural University Gymnasium.

"He was amped up," said Byers, who prevailed, 4-1, 1-1 and 1-1. "He's gotten a whole lot better. I think even bigger and stronger. His wrist is like the size of VCR tapes.

"It's his home country. A lot of honor is in your heart when you're wrestling in front of your people. You want to give them a medal because sometimes there are people out there who deserve it more than you. My hat's off to him. That's a tough loss for him and his home crowd. He brought it. He was really trying hard. I was just able to hold him off."

Sweden's Jalmir Sjöberg ended Byers' tournament with a 0-3, 1-1 and 1-1 victory that seemed to slip from the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program Soldier's grasp.

"He came out real fast, so I was ready for it," Byers said. "I got out there and saw that he was feeling it just as much as I was. And my offense wasn't working for me in the end, like when I really needed to. I tried to hit that gut wrench as many

times as I could, and it didn't pan out."

Byers, a Kings Mountain, N.C., native stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., quickly realized and admitted his shortcomings shortly after losing.

"In competitions like this, you're looking to see your soul out there gasping on the mat for air, and it didn't happen today," he said. "I walked off, I wasn't tired. I was like, 'Man, if I'm not tired, then I didn't do everything I should've done.'"

Late in both of the scoreless second and third periods between Byers and Sjöberg, coin flips determined which wrestler would start on top in *par terre*. The Swede benefited both times. Byers expended extra energy while defending from below. When he got his turn on top, Byers failed to turn Sjöberg, who scored one point on both occasions.

Byers, however, refused to use that as an excuse.

"If these rules were something that started last week, I would probably have a whole lot to say about it, but I've won some matches the same way," Byers said. "It's something we know. It's an occupational hazard, I guess, but we accept it the way it is."

Byers' working mantra for most of the past decade has been to "get my hand raised, and our song played" at international tournaments. He knows, however, that hearing "The Star-Spangled Banner" playing on foreign soil while watching the Stars & Stripes getting hoisted to the rafters never comes easily.

Byers, a world champion in 2002, always has been one to successfully roll with the changes. He has wrestled out of the shadow of two-time heavyweight Olympic medalist Rulon Gardner, for whom Byers served as a training partner at the 2004 Athens Games.

"You've got to find something to keep you going," said Byers, a 6-foot-2 gentle giant off the mat who rarely complains.

"There's something in us that makes us keep going. It might be just drive, determination, American spirit, me and my background soldiering,

I don't know, but there's just something in here that says it's never time to quit. We've got something we can accomplish here, so we're going to hit it hard these next four years and do everything we have to do."

Although he has been a contender for three U.S. Olympic teams, Byers, 33, was an Olympic rookie in Beijing. He learned a lot as the veteran wrestler on a young Team USA.

"Honestly, it's a lot smaller tournament than what I thought," Byers said. "And I could've brought a whole lot bigger fight. I'm kicking myself for that."


Even in defeat, Byers always maintains an uncanny sense of humor and commands utmost respect. He knows how to lose graciously, but he does not have to like it.

"You can't put a cap on the fight in an American's heart," Byers said. "We're just craving another chance now. This is just fuel for something bigger, and the only thing bigger is the next Olympics." **sm**

Tim Hipps works for FMWR Public Affairs



(Top photo) Staff Sgt. Dremiel Byers wrestles to a 4-0, 1-1, 1-1 victory over China's Deli Liu in the second round of the Olympic Greco-Roman 120-kilogram tournament. (Bottom photo) Staff Sgt. Shon Lewis (right) and Marine Corps Maj. Jay Antonelli (left) coach Staff Sgt. Dremiel Byers to a 4-0, 1-1, 1-1 victory over China's Deli Liu in the second round of the Olympic Greco-Roman tournament.



Members of the 2008 U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Teams meet President George W. Bush, Oct. 7, to thank him and the first lady for their support of the Olympic movement.

# Capital venture

## Team USA Soldier Olympians visit White House

Story & photos by Tim Hippius

**T**EN Soldiers from the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program and U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit visited the White House in October.

They were among more than 500 members of the 2008 U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Teams who thanked President Bush and First Lady Laura for their support of the Olympic movement throughout the Beijing Games.

The president, in turn, thanked the athletes for their inspirational performances.

"This is a special day for the White House," Bush said. "Laura and I are proud to welcome the greatest Olympic and paralympic team ever assembled. And I bring greetings

from the honorary captain of the Olympic teams, (former) President George H.W. Bush. We call him 41."

The Bushes were among more than 80 world dignitaries who attended the Opening Ceremony in Beijing. George W. Bush was the first U.S. president to attend Olympic games outside of the United States while serving as commander in chief. His father, the 41st president, also made history by occupying the chair of chef de mission of the U.S. Olympic Team, marking the first time the U.S. Olympic Committee has had an honorary chief of the mission.

"Attending the Beijing Olympics was one of the greatest experiences of our lifetime," Bush said. "Laura and I had a fantastic experience. We will never forget the first night at the Bird's Nest for the spectacular open-

ing ceremony. When the Team USA was announced, there was a notable increase in the cheers.

"And then came the greatest sight of all when more than 500 of America's finest athletes (were) marching behind our flag. It was an incredible sight, and I know it was a moment that all of our athletes looked forward to, and it's a moment that we are so honored to share with you."

Team USA won 110 medals, more than any other nation during the Beijing Games, the largest in Olympic history. More than 100,000 athletes from around the world competed in more than 300 events in which 87 countries won medals.

Along the way, 43 world records were broken as an estimated 4.7 billion television viewers watched from around the globe.



"I know the entire Olympic teams worked hard to get to this moment," Bush said. "Whether you won a medal or not really doesn't matter in the long run. What really matters is the honor you brought to your sports, and to your families, and to your country."

"We thank you for your lasting memories that you gave us all."

"I'm particularly pleased to be here with those who have worn the uniform of our country," Bush continued. "On the American team were 16 men and women who served the nation in uniform, one of whom was Army 1st Lt. Melissa Stockwell. She lost her leg while serving our country in Iraq. After four years of hard work and significant rehabilitation, she qualified as a (Paralympic) swimmer and her teammates elected her as the flag bearer for the closing ceremony."

The U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program was represented by Team USA rifle coach Maj. Dave Johnson, Greco-Roman wrestler Staff Sgt. Dremiel Byers, rifle marksman Maj. Michael Anti and pistol shooter Staff Sgt. Keith Sanderson. Five other Soldiers hailed from the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, Ga.: Sgts. 1st Class Jason Parker and Daryl Szarenski, and Spcs. Jeff Holguin, Walton Glenn Eller III and Vincent Hancock, along with Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Elizabeth "Libby" Callahan.

"I'm not easily excited," said Sanderson, who posted an Olympic record qualification score of 583 before finishing fifth in the 25-meter rapid-fire pistol event in Beijing. "But it was cool to see the president talk. It's kind of surreal. 'Hey, that's the guy on TV, but he's right here in front of me.'"

With members of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports on the South Lawn, Bush urged people to make exercise a part of their daily regimen.

"There's no better time to remind our fellow citizens that physical fitness will lead to a healthy America," he said. "Look what's happening to the people surrounding me. So we

urge our fellow citizens to take time out of your day to exercise. Not every one of you has to ride a mountain bike, but if you walk just 20 minutes a day, you'll help America and help yourself."

Bush said the Olympians made an indelible mark on both him and his wife.

"Long after we leave the White House, Laura and I will remember the extraordinary spirit and kindness of the athletes that we have met here at the White House and in Beijing," he said.

The Olympians thanked President and Mrs. Bush by making them honorary members of Team USA and presenting them with official team jackets, a framed photograph of the Opening Ceremony and an American flag that flew in China throughout both games.

WCAP Greco-Roman heavy-weight wrestler Byers was touched by the ceremony.

"I was honored to be here," Byers

said. "I can't wait till I come back the next time. Only difference is next time I'm coming back with a medal around my neck."

Byers and Sanderson also took a tour of the White House.

"It was a quick tour, but it was an honor to be there," Byers said. "It's not something I've ever done. And to get to be around other athletes while we're doing it made it feel like we belonged there."

Byers wished more of his fellow Soldiers could cherish the experience.

"We're Soldiers first and we know that. We live that. And we keep that in mind," Byers said. "That's why you put your little personal feelings aside. I didn't achieve the medal I wanted, but still, somebody is over there doing my job for me right now."

"I carry that with me and I appreciate it. And being around these Paralympic athletes is humbling. Some of them were prior service and they lost a limb at war."

Team USA rifle coach Maj. David Johnson, a WCAP Soldier, has participated in three Olympic White House visits—once as an athlete and twice as a coach.

"This is a very important part of the whole Olympic process," Johnson said. "Representing the USA and then bringing it all the way home to the White House and being honored with the president here and his wife, it's incredible. It really brings the Olympic movement full circle."

"I think it's great because it's a day where you truly see politics disappear. Everybody is red, white and blue, and you can see everybody is excited. It's a rare opportunity to come here to the White House."

"To me, it's very much an honor and a pleasure. It's team USA, all the way from the top down to the bottom up. I definitely want to keep coming back. I get charged up to come here, even as a coach, to watch. It's a lot of pride and a lot of fun to watch the athletes after so many hard years of work. It's just icing on the cake."

sm

Tim Hipps works for FMWRG Public Affairs



(Top) President George W. Bush and the first lady display official Team USA Olympic jackets after being proclaimed honorary members of the team by 2008 U.S. Olympic and Paralympic athletes, Oct. 7, on the south lawn of the White House. Five-time Paralympic goalball player Jennifer Ambuster (center) made the presentation.

(Bottom) Left to right in back row wearing berets: U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit Olympians Spc. Walton Glenn Eller III, Sgt. 1st Class Jason Parker, Spc. Jeff Holguin, Spc. Vincent Hancock, Staff Sgt. Daryl Szarenski and Maj. Michael Anti assemble for the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Teams' visit to the White House, Oct. 7.

# Soldier-athletes share Olympic moments

Story & photo by Tim Hipps



Clockwise from left, Spc. Walton Glenn Eller III, Maj. Michael Anti, Sgt. 1st Class Jason Parker, Spc. Jeffrey Holguin, Spc. Vincent Hancock, Sgt. 1st Class Daryl Szarenski, Staff Sgt. Dremiel Byers and Sgt. 1st Class Keith Sanderson present a framed Olympic photo display to Director of the Army Staff Lt. Gen. David Huntoon Jr. at the Pentagon, Oct. 9.

**T**EN Army Olympians visited the nation's capital in October to spread the word about Soldiers' involvement in the Beijing Games and to thank senior military leaders for their support.

The U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, Army Marksmanship Unit and Army Reserve athletes posed for photographs and signed autographs at the Association of the United States Army's annual meeting and other military workplaces around town.

They met with Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George Casey Jr., Director of the Army Staff Lt. Gen. David Huntoon Jr. and Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth Preston at the Pentagon.

"I think it's important that we meet the Secretary of Defense and all the leadership of the Army to thank them for their support and the opportunity to represent not only the U.S. Army but the United States," said WCAP Maj. Michael Anti, a four-time Olympian who won a silver medal in three-position rifle shooting at the Athens Games in 2004.

Anti, who placed ninth in the 50-meter rifle prone event in Beijing, was touched by a patriotic display of the U.S. Army's history during the opening ceremony of the AUSA Convention.

"If you're an American and don't get a lump in your throat watching some of the videos and hearing the commentary, there's probably some-

thing wrong," he said.

Anti was joined by fellow WCAP Olympians Staff Sgt. Dremiel Byers, a Greco-Roman heavyweight wrestler; Staff Sgt. Keith Sanderson, who finished fifth in the Olympic rapid fire pistol event in Beijing; and Maj. David Johnson, Team USA's rifle coach during the last two summer Olympics who competed in two events at the 1992 Barcelona Games.

"It's great to be here," Byers said of visiting the Pentagon for the first time. "I can see the history on the walls and the professionalism of our country being represented. A lot of powerful things have happened here and a lot of great things have happened here."

Sanderson had run around the Pentagon but had never been inside.

"It's like the Mall of America, but they don't let you in all the shops," he quipped. "They try to keep you out of all the shops."

Specialists Walton Glenn Eller III and Vincent Hancock, who won gold medals in double trap and skeet shotgun shooting respectively in Beijing, represented the Army Marksmanship Unit, along with Sgt. 1st Class Jason Parker, Sgt. 1st Class Daryl Szarenski and Spc. Jeffrey Holguin. Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Elizabeth "Libby" Callahan, 56, the oldest female competitor in U.S. Olympic history, completed the group.

Gold medalists Eller and Hancock received the troops' preferential treatment, including a personal visit with Vice President Richard Cheney in the west wing of the White House.

"This is still more than I can believe, to tell you the truth," Hancock said. "It really is a dream come true. I've said that since the moment I got the gold medal around my neck. Every day is surprising what new comes about. I couldn't ask for anything better."

Hancock shared with Geren and Casey the story of how he was recruited to join the Army as a 16-year-old shotgun-shooting star who won seven international competitions before completing Basic Training between his junior and senior years of high school.

"I started beating guys they had on their team, so they asked me to join," Hancock said, which elicited a round of laughter from the group.

"My brother and my father were competitive shooters when I was growing up, and I was playing a lot of baseball and I didn't really want to shoot. But my dad asked to go out and try it when I was about 10 years old. I went out and fell in love with it and have been doing it ever since.

"My brother is in the military, too. He's been through two tours of Iraq and he's going to Afghanistan next February. He's now a warrant officer."

The Olympians presented framed photo displays to the Army senior leaders.

"It means an awful lot to us to have folks like you out there competing and demonstrating what the Army can do," Geren told the athletes. **sm**

Tim Hipps works for FMWRG Public Affairs



# Soldier is oldest U.S. female competitor in Beijing Olympics

Story & photos by Tim Hipps

**A**T age 56, Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Elizabeth “Libby” Callahan became the oldest U.S. female competitor in Olympic history with a 25th-place finish in the women’s 25-meter pistol shooting event at the Summer Games in August.

“I’ve been told I’m the oldest-ever female Olympian of any nation, of all time,” Callahan said. “But I don’t know if that’s right.”

USA Shooting officials could not confirm that claim. At any rate, Callahan certainly has withstood the test of time on the competitive pistol-shooting line.

“Well, it shows my longevity, I guess,” Callahan said with a laugh and a smile. “I’m just still kicking, and I’m not putting any restrictions on myself. It doesn’t say I have to stop at a certain age.”

“In fact, the oldest Olympic medalist was in shooting and he was 73, back in the early 1900s.”

Therefore, Callahan, a four-time Olympian, is already considering taking a shot at the 2012 London Games.

“I’m not ruling it out,” she said. “I’m not ruling anything out. I still feel good, and I still have that competitive fire in me.”

Callahan’s passion for pistol packing has already earned Summer Olympic trips to Barcelona, Atlanta and Athens, along with journeys to Hyderabad, India, for the Conseil Internationale du Sport Militaire’s 2007 Military World Games, and to Salinas, Puerto Rico, for the 2005 Championships of the Americas. She’s also competed in five World Championships and as many Pan American Games.

After retiring in 2003 from a 28-year career with the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department, Callahan moved from Upper Marlboro, Md., to Pawleys Island, S.C., to be closer to her seven older brothers and sisters. She now has an unprecedented amount of free time to sharpen her shooting skills and compete internationally.

“What I’ve probably done in a lot of areas is that I’ve tried too hard,” Callahan said. “I shoot great technique. I’ve been told this not just by U.S. coaches but other international coaches. It’s just something’s happening just a few times in a match that throws me out of some competitions. That’s a mental thing. And you know, the brain, the mind, is a terrible thing.”

Callahan can easily laugh with herself—seemingly oblivious of the fact that Father Time could be ticking on her athletic career. Her approach to the sport, however, remains the same.

“You still have to have the same mental approach; have to have the same techniques to execute the shot,” she said. “There may be a different perspective in maybe somebody who is younger or hasn’t been here before, but that’s just all part of experience—just having general experience in life.”

“Throughout shooting, you will find that some things work at a certain period of time, and then after a while it doesn’t work anymore, so you maybe try something different. Maybe it’s your stance, maybe it’s your grip, maybe it’s your gun. There are always things that if something’s not working and you’ve worked at it for a while, OK, let’s try something



Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Elizabeth “Libby” Callahan, a member of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, prepares to make her third Olympic appearance in pistol shooting during the Athens Games. The Beijing Games marked her fourth appearance.

different. How you execute, and how you execute under certain conditions, is always the important thing.

“I’m way more advanced than I was when I first started shooting, but it’s some mental things that really grab me at certain times and it hurts me in the match.”

Callahan did not advance to the final in Beijing. Her career-best Olympic finish was 19th in the 2004 sport pistol event in Athens, where she also placed 30th in the air pistol competition.

“Some days you’re really good. Some days you’re really bad. And some days you’re mediocre,” she said. “That’s what makes shooting interesting and I guess challenging. You can shoot a perfect score, and the next day go out and you aren’t diddly squat.”

Either way, Callahan always finds the resolve to shoot another day. **sm**

Tim Hipps works for FMWRC Public Affairs

# Wounded warriors take to the



By Elizabeth M. Collins

**R**ETIRED Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Bowser is an amputee, but when he's out on the ice rink, his injuries disappear—literally—and he becomes a regular hockey player. His prosthesis vanishes under layers of padding and hockey gear, and like many other wounded warriors involved in the USA Warriors Ice Hockey Program, he looks and skates like an able-bodied player.

Soldiers say the program, supported by the USA Hockey Disabled section, is the highlight of their week. It was formed last spring to give wounded servicemembers an opportunity to get out of Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Bethesda Naval Medical Center and other facilities. They can forget about their injuries and just be athletes a couple Saturdays a month at the Gardens Ice House in Laurel, Md.

"It shows the guys at all levels that you can get out here and do it," said Bowser, who lost a leg in Iraq in 2004. "Even if it's the first time you get your skates on, you come out here and you try. It's not what we can't do. It's what we can do.

"We're all here to support each other," he added. "It's almost like a therapy group because we're all here, we all have the love for the game

and it doesn't matter what level we are. We help each other out. To me, it's the best therapy going, because I'm out here with guys who are just like me instead of being out there with guys with two legs and no other problems."

An experienced hockey player, after he was wounded, Bowser focused on getting back on the ice. It took a year and a half to heal, rebuild his strength and adjust to his prosthetic before he could balance on skates, but last year he made the U.S. Amputee Hockey team. More than anything, he said, hockey is great exercise and good physical therapy because he doesn't think about where to transfer his weight when he's playing. He said he just concentrates on the game.

Other players like Pfc. Phillip W. Clement, who is undergoing cancer treatment, are out on the ice for the first or second time. Clement admits that he still isn't sure how to stop once he starts moving on the ice.

He said he loves "just being out with all the other wounded Soldiers. It's fun to be with other people who don't know what they're doing. We're all learning together."

Experienced coaches like retired Col. Bob Atkinson are on hand to make sure the servicemembers—who may be amputees like Bowser, sick like Clement or have serious nerve damage—learn the game and aren't re-injured.

The players must first clear their participation with their physical and occupational therapists, Atkinson



The USA Warriors Ice Hockey team took on the Washington Ice Dogs during their first game, Nov. 22. The Warriors lost, but planned two rematches in December and February.

said. The coaches also call for frequent breaks and watch carefully to make sure the Soldiers aren't getting too worn out.

He added that one of the first things the coaches learned is that the legs of servicemembers with a certain type of pin prosthesis might turn without their knowledge when they skate.

"A concern we always had was that if they're below-knee amputees, they could badly damage their remaining knee joints or their other knees," Atkinson said of the prosthetics. "So that was something we had to work on quickly, and we're learning too.

"The coaching staff and everybody who works with these folks, we're learning on a medical and physiological side what they can do and emotionally what they can do, which is sometimes way over what we ever expected. Their enthusiasm is way, way over the top. We have to be careful to stop them when it's time to stop. If we don't, they will stay out here all day."

Bowser knows exactly what Atkinson was talking about. He plays with able-bodied men all the time, and has to be careful, especially because they usually have no idea he's injured.

"I remember one time we were out there playing and I caught an edge and I fell down and I couldn't get back up and I asked the guys on the bench if they'd help me up and they said, 'Oh yeah, no problem.' I said,



‘Well, before you pick me all the way up, can you take my foot and turn it in a little bit?’ They said, ‘Oh dude, don’t even touch it!’ So they thought that I broke my leg. I said, ‘It’s a prosthetic.’ They had no idea.”

Not only do many of the Soldiers look like able-bodied players, they’re treated like it. Atkinson said USA Hockey doesn’t bend the rules for disabled players. The Soldiers skated, blocked and turned with the best, and they got back up and started playing again after slipping and sliding on the ice.

Servicemembers who can’t stand or balance on skates can play as well, thanks to sled hockey, where players sit on low seats with skates on the bottom and propel themselves using two small hockey sticks. Atkinson said these players need a few rule adjustments, but that otherwise they’re also treated like average players.

“You’re out here with other guys who are wounded, and the ones who will be the hardest on you are the other wounded guys. I’m going to dog him if he’s not skating the way he should,” said Bowser.

With many of the players still learning hockey basics, the team is mostly in practice mode, but played their first game in November against the American Special Hockey Association’s Washington Ice Dogs, whose players also have special needs. The warriors lost, but Mike Hickey, president of the American Special Hockey Association, said it was a great experience, and at press time the two teams planned to match up again in December and February.

They’ll play against anyone they can, whether kids or able-bodied teams, Bowser said, adding that his real hope is that other warrior transition units will form teams. Right now, he said there’s a sled-hockey team at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio that he wants to play.

But the best part about the match-up was that it gave the servicemembers the opportunity to mentor young special-needs players, said Hickey, adding he hopes many of the players will remain involved in special-hockey programs after they return to their hometowns or duty stations.

“The special-hockey players re-

ally look up to the warriors, so it’s a great combination of them working together for the sport of hockey,” he said.

The Soldiers are truly inspiring, said Atkinson.

“These are fellow Soldiers for the most part,” Atkinson said. “Once you’re in the military, you don’t give up. You’re going to stay with these guys and help them. There’s an awful lot of satisfaction we get by working with these guys and seeing them progress from week to week.

“They’re more than deserving of recognition for what they give up, and any support anybody can give is a big, big thing...I put my skates on probably 20 or 30 times a week and I just don’t think about it anymore, but now, every time I come out here with these guys and put my skates on, there’s always going to be one or two of them who come back and say just how appreciative they are of what we do for them. It’s very humbling. They’re appreciative of us putting in an hour out here on the ice rink, but we’re appreciative of what they did. Look at how much they gave.” **sm**



A wounded Soldier takes a shot at the goal at hockey practice in Laurel, Md. Sled hockey lets those who can’t balance on skates participate. (Inset) Retired Sgt. 1st Class Joe Bowser gives some pointers to Andrew Rouff. After their first game with the Washington Ice Dogs, Nov. 22, the wounded warriors spent some time mentoring young players.



## WAQ White Water Rafting

Warrior Adventure Quest combines high-adrenaline sports such as whitewater rafting with Battlemind training to help Soldiers adjust to the return to garrison life from the combat environment.

— Photo by FMWRC







## Army Releases New Training Manual

**T**he Army released the new field manual FM 7-0, Training for Full Spectrum Operations, at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., Dec. 15.

The new manual replaces the 2002 edition of FM 7-0, Training the Force.

“Today’s full-spectrum operations environment demands more from our men and women in uniform than ever before, and nothing is more important than training to ensure their success,” said Lt. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, commanding general of the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center.

“This manual will have a direct impact on our Soldiers—codifying our current doctrine directly into training the full breadth and complexity of today’s missions, to include offensive, defensive and stability operations.”

This is the first time the Army has synchronized the manuals for operations and training.

“Now is the right time to release the new training manual,” said Brig. Gen. Robert B. Abrams, director of Training for CAC. “We’ve been at war a little over six years, and our last training manual was published just after 9/11. A lot has changed since then. The operational environment has changed, and we now have a force that is the most combat-experienced in the history of the country. There are many factors that went into the need to update FM 7-0.”

In 2008, the Army released three important field manuals: FM 3-0, Operations, changed the way the Army operates, with the focus of the Army being on offensive, defensive and stability operations. FM 3-07, Stability Operations, went into detail of how the Army will perform its mission when called upon as a stabilizing force. FM 7-0 provides training guidance to prepare the Army to



Phil Sussman

train the way it will fight.

“FM 7-0 is almost entirely driven by FM 3-0,” said Abrams. “This is the first time in recent doctrinal history that our Army’s capstone operations manual FM 3-0 has been at the forefront of our training manual.”

“The two writing teams have been nested from the beginning,” Abrams said, explaining that they focused on the same operational concepts “so that we train to be a full-spectrum Army, not just in name, but in reality.”

FM 7-0 sets out to change the Army mindset. The manual states that the Army cannot return to its pre-9/11 focus of training for offensive and defensive operations in major combat operations. Army leaders must think differently about training and leader development in an Army that must be capable of conducting simultaneous offense, defense and stability or civil-support operations. — *John Harlow, TRADOC Public Affairs*

## Policy change allows Soldiers to serve longer

**A** recent extension of retention control points means Soldiers in the rank of staff sergeant and above will be allowed to serve the Army longer, should they desire.

The changes, which became effective Nov. 1, increase RCPs for E-6s and above by as many as three years in some cases. The new policy also changes the maximum age for enlisted Soldiers to 62 years.

The increase in RCP—called “high year of tenure” in the Air Force and Navy—is a force-shaping measure meant to allow experienced noncommissioned officers to stay in the Army longer.

“This is not designed to address any specific shortage,” said Master Sgt. Patrick Johnson, retention operations NCO with Army G-1 at the Pentagon. “Rather, it is to provide an avenue for our experienced NCOs to stay in longer if they wish, and to stabilize the force longer. It’s good for the Army and good for readiness.”

The change to RCP applies to active-duty Army Soldiers and to reserve-component Soldiers in the Active Guard Reserve program. Changes have been made to the RCP for Soldiers in the grade of E-6 and above, and include:

- Staff Sergeant, 23 years
- Staff Sergeant (Promotable), 26 years
- Sergeant First Class, 26 years
- Sergeant First Class (Promotable), 29 years
- First Sergeant/Master Sergeant, 29 years
- First Sergeant/Master Sergeant (Promotable), 32 years
- Command Sergeant Major/Sergeant Major, 32 years

The RCP defines the maximum time a Soldier may stay in the Army at a certain rank. For instance, the RCP for a promotable staff sergeant is now 26 years—up from 24.

Johnson said that the change to the RCP does not mean a Soldier must now stay in the Army longer. In fact, Soldiers may apply for retirement any time after becoming eligible.

**For more information, see All-Army-Activities message, or ALARACT, dated Nov. 8.**



## FCS launcher on new class of Navy ship

**T**he Non-Line of Sight Launch System, being developed as part of the Army's Future Combat Systems, has been selected for use aboard the first of the U.S. Navy's Littoral Combat Ships, the USS Freedom.

The 378-foot Freedom—along with its sister ship, Independence, being built in Mobile, Ala.—represents a new class of ship for the Navy. These Littoral Combat Ships are designed to operate quickly in shallow water to counter threats in coastal regions, known as littoral areas, Navy officials said. They said the ships are specifically designed to counter mines, submarines and fast, in-shore attack craft.

At the core of the new ship's capability to counter the coastal threats is the NLOS-Launch System, said Allan Ashley, the Navy liaison at the NLOS-LS Project Office. He said the launch system is scheduled to be evaluated aboard the new ship during tests in early 2009.

The NLOS-LS consists of a rapidly deployable networked container launch unit that houses 15 Precision Attack Missiles.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Katherine Boeder, USN



In the Navy application, four 15-missile NLOS-LS Container Launch Units are integrated together into one 60-missile mission module. Littoral Combat Ships will have weapons zones for up to three mission modules per ship. Therefore, depending on the operation, as many as 180 NLOS-LS Precision Attack Missiles may be available to the ship's captain to counter threats.

Ashley said the NLOS-LS can also counter threats during landing operations, maritime special operations missions, and counter-piracy activities. — *Sam Tricomo*

## Army developing new EW career field

**B**y 2010, the Army expects to have over 1,500 Soldiers trained in the art of "blinding and deafening" America's enemies by wielding the radio spectrum as a weapon.

The Army has in the past relied heavily on both the Navy and the Air Force for their electronic-warfare capability, said Col. Laurie G. Buckhout, the Army's chief of electronic warfare. But the service plans to remedy that by creating a new electronic warfare career field for officers, warrant officers and enlisted members.

"We're going to be able to protect ourselves from spectrum-using threats, which we can't really do for ourselves today," said Buckhout. "We have the Air Force and the Navy

doing that for us now and that is getting a little old for them and old for us. We want to be able to attack, blind, deafen and isolate the enemy before he does it to us."

The Army doesn't really plan on making anybody actually blind or deaf. Instead, it plans on providing Soldiers with the training and equipment they need to effectively wage war within the radio spectrum and to apply fires on that new battlefield that can destroy the ability of the enemy to communicate amongst themselves.

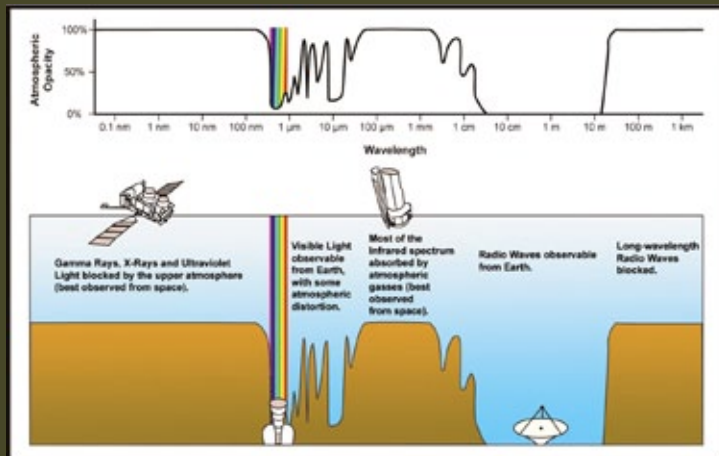
"Electronic warfare is the new battlefield, it's our new domain," said Buckhout.

To man the guns on that new battlefield, in both offensive and defensive roles, the Army is creating the 29-series career field for electronic warfare operators and officers.

The Army recently pushed seven officers through a new pilot course at Fort Sill, Okla. The course will qualify them to carry the designation of electronic warfare officer, should Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr. sign off on a Force Design Update.

But it's not just officers the Army plans to train. New courses are now being developed for both enlisted Soldiers and warrant officers. The Army expects to initially man the electronic warfare career field with some 1,511 Soldiers in the rank of sergeant and above. The new graduates will man positions in Army operations sections, not in intelligence sections, where electronic warfare-types have served in the past, Buckhout said.

"That is a huge change for the Army and it is revolutionary in the way the Army is now looking at holistic electronic warfare," he added. — *C. Todd Lopez, ARNEWS*



New EW career field to 'blind enemy' with science.



# All-Army men's team wins silver medal in 2008 Armed Forces Soccer

Story & photos by Tim Hipps

**S**ECOND Lt. Andrew Filauro and Staff Sgt. Titus Kamau led the All-Army men's team to a silver medal in the 2008 Armed Forces Soccer Championship Tournament at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C.

Kamau, a striker, and Filauro, a goalkeeper, were named to the All-Tournament Team after helping Army post a 3-2-1 record in the double-round-robin format against tourney champion Air Force (5-1), Navy (2-3-1) and host Marine Corps (1-5).

Army defeated Air Force, 3-1, early in the tournament, but dropped a pivotal, 2-1 decision to the Airmen on Monday after Sgt. Pius Kubi was red-carded in the second half.

"After we got the red card, we played our best, but we were a man down for about 20 minutes," Kamau said. "Whenever we went to help somebody, your position was left open, so some of our guys wore down."

Airman 1st Class Peter Miller of Hurlburt Field, Fla., scored two goals, including the game-winner in the 89th minute, to win the rematch against Army.

"Army was a real tough game, really physical, a lot of body on body," said Airman 1st Class Danny Fluker of Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. "We came out and got a quick goal off a nice cross and a volley. As the

game went on, it got tighter and came down to the last minute of the game."

In the 89th minute, Miller was fouled, setting up a free kick for Air Force. Filauro made a nice save on the ensuing play, but Miller was there to bang his own rebound into the net for the game-winner.

Air Force secured the championship with a 2-0 victory over the Marines on Tuesday. Had the Airmen lost or played that match to a draw, Army could have won the tournament with a victory over Navy in the tourney finale.

Captain Paul Gagliardi of McChord Air Force Base, Wash., scored both goals in the second half off assists from Fluker. "This is the third year I've played," Gagliardi said, "and every time it comes down to us and the Army and we lose it in the last game, so it's nice to win one this year. Everyone was really gunning to beat Army because they're pretty much our rival every year."

Kamau, a native of Kenya and a medic at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., came to the United States seven years ago and joined the Army within a year. He deployed to Iraq in 2005-2006.

"I asked the recruiter if the Army plays soccer, and he said, 'Yeah, we have an All-Army soccer team,' so I thought my ideal would be that every now and then I should be going to play," Kamau said.

"This tournament is a very, very good way of bringing the forces together and it gets your mind off the war a little bit, but we never forget we are Soldiers first in everything we do. To come to All-Army, I have to prove to my commander that I can not only be a good Soldier and do my job, but that he can trust me to represent my installation and come back and do my job."

People often ask if the Army's All-Army or World Class Athlete Program athletes deploy. Staff Sgt. Joshua Blodgett of Fort Carson, Colo., is a classic example of athletes being Soldiers first. After scoring three goals in the first half of the 2005 Armed Forces Championship Tournament in San Diego, he got called back to his unit to deploy to Iraq. Kamau followed him after playing two more games. Army went on to win the gold medal that year.

"I was actually sitting in the hangar waiting for our plane to come so we could get on to fly to Iraq and T.K. called me up on the phone and told me we won it," Blodgett recalled. "He left two days later for Iraq, and brought my gold medal out to me. I had it hanging up while I was in Iraq."

While in Iraq, Kamau and Blodgett organized and played together in street soccer tournaments to keep their skills up.

This year, Blodgett got the Army



off to a roaring start by scoring three goals in a span of 2 minutes, 15 seconds during the Soldiers' 3-2 victory over the Marines in their opening game.

Blodgett, 32, is the all-time goal scoring leader in Armed Forces Soccer Tournament history with 22 goals in seven years of competition. At the 2002 tournament in Dover, Del., he tallied four goals in one game against the Marines.

Coincidentally, the No. 2-ranked Armed Forces Tournament career goal scorer is All-Army coach Sgt. 1st Class Agustin Mendez of Fort Myer, Va., who tallied 18 goals in five years of competition.

"I don't mind that a fellow Army guy beat me in goal scoring," said Mendez, who learned after the loss to Navy that he had been named 2007 Army Coach of the Year.

Filauro, 23, an Armed Forces rookie goalkeeper stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., is a 2007 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. He learned a lot about military life from veterans at the tournament.

"I didn't know what to expect," Filauro said. "I knew there were a lot of combat veterans here who had been past the wire and downrange. They have a lot of experience to bring to the team. It's more than just a soccer team, it's more like a brotherhood. Everyone brings all types of leadership abilities and experiences to the table, which overall made our team pretty successful."

The All-Army team won Armed Forces gold in each of the past two years. Since 2000, the Soldiers have won gold or silver in every year of the tournament. **sm**

Tim Hips works for FMWRC Public Affairs

(Top photo) Staff Sgt. Titus Kamau (left) of Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., battles an All-Navy player for control of the ball during All-Army's 1-0 loss to the Sailors in the final game of the 2008 Armed Forces Soccer Championship Tournament at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C.

(Bottom photo) All-Navy goalkeeper Petty Officer 3rd Class Jacob Alford makes a save between Capt. Mark Hillen (left) of Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., and Sgt. Richard Pina of Fort Stewart, Ga., during the Sailors' 1-0 victory over All-Army in the final match of the men's 2008 Armed Forces Soccer Championship Tournament.





# Wounded troops back in the swing

Story and photos by Tim Hips

THE Salute Military Golf Association has helped hundreds of combat-wounded service-members get back into the swing of life—both physically and psychologically—by providing free instruction, golf clubs, balls and practice facilities.

Most of the wounded warriors who attend clinics at Olney Golf Club in Maryland come from Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Bethesda Naval Hospital, where they are recovering from severe injuries.

Some come on prosthetic legs. Some hold the club in one hand, while maintaining balance with a metal hook that serves as the other. Some have never played golf before. Some may never again play the game as well as they once did.

They all, however, seem to leave feeling more content than they came.

“You can feel sorry for yourself all you want, but it’s not going to make your situation any better,” said Spc. Saul Bosquez, who had his left leg amputated below the knee and lost two right toes after getting hit with an improvised explosive device while on patrol in Baghdad. “So why not try to do something?”

Bosquez, of Fort Benning, Ga., has been rehabilitating at Walter Reed since September, when he learned about the SMGA.

“I figured I might as well do something while I’m here,” he said. “If you’re out doing stuff, it takes

your mind off what happened. You might have a little reminder here and there while trying to make a swing – it’s more difficult because of your disability. But I’m out here golfing while there are guys still over in Iraq, so I can’t really complain.”

A member of the Eastern Amputee Golf Association, Bosquez recently shot a 92 at Tournament Players Club Scottsdale in Arizona. On a couple of local courses, he has posted nine-hole scores of 43 and 45.

“Before, it was pretty much ‘here’s a ball, now go hit it,’ Bosquez said. “Now there’s a little more thought process going into my swing.

Coming from a baseball background, all I wanted to do is just hit it as far as I could. Now there’s a little more of a science to it.

“I can do other things but they don’t have a lot of programs for the things that I want to do,” he said.

“I would like to start a baseball program and actually play in a league.”

That kind of spirit is what inspired Jim Estes to create the Salute Military Golf Association, whose mission is to provide rehabilitative golf experiences for Soldiers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. A former PGA Tour player and current director of instruction at Olney Golf Park, Estes launched the program last year.

“Most people, if they don’t do it well, they quit,” Estes said. “These guys, they don’t quit at anything, so



Wounded troops participate in a clinic at Olney Golf Club in Maryland.





“You might have a little reminder here and there while trying to make a swing—it’s more difficult because of your disability. But I’m out here golfing while there are guys still over in Iraq, so I can’t really complain.”





Spc. Saul Bosquez drives a golf ball with one hand while using the hook that serves as his other hand to help him balance on one leg during a Salute Military Golf Association clinic at Olney Golf Park.



Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command program analyst Trace Kea, a PGA Professional, works with Marine Lance Cpl. Tim Lang, a Humvee gunner who lost his lower right leg after being hit by an IED in Fallujah, Iraq.

they've got a perfect mentality for it. You tell them how long and how hard and they'll do it. That's the sort of people we wish we had as students. Most people play golf for recreation. These guys play golf for therapy and recreation."

Just getting out and about and mingling with others is half the battle.

"It's good to get out and socialize because after physical therapy I just go home and really don't do anything," said Sgt. Randy Coggins of Fort Campbell, Ky. "I'm not as depressed as I used to be."

While driving through northern Baghdad on Aug. 23, 2007, Coggins was hit by an explosively formed penetrator that severed his left leg below the knee and shredded the Achilles tendon in his right leg.

"I don't really take it too hard," Coggins said.

"I just tell myself it happens sometimes and you've got to deal with it—just got to accept the fact

that it's the way I'm going to be for the rest of my life."

An eight-year Army veteran, Coggins, has come full circle back to Walter Reed, where he was born. Disabled Sports USA program services assistant Kat Poster approached him there about joining forces with the SMGA.

"I said, 'Sure, I'll give it a try,'" Coggins said of the invitation to play golf. "This is my second time out. I had never played golf before. It's kind of cool, actually. I'll try playing a round of golf and see how that works out, but right now I'm pretty content just knocking the ball around."

Those kinds of comments make Estes smile.

"I've seen it happen firsthand—how guys change their mind: go from depressed and drugged to the point they're almost reaching for medication and everything's negative because that's the environment,"

Estes said. "Every single day a doctor is telling them 'this is what's wrong with you' and pretty soon that's all they're thinking about."

"So let's get out of that medical atmosphere. Nothing against physicians, that's what they're trained to do is tell you what's wrong with you, but you can't play and have fun and be in a proper mindset with golf and think that way. So we just transform that."

Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command program analyst Trace Kea, a nine-year PGA Professional, volunteered to help instruct the wounded warriors every Saturday from April 5 through May 24.

"It was a great way to give something back to these guys, who have given their all for us," said Kea, who also worked with the group last year. "Their attitudes are great. They love that someone is doing something for them and they love this program."





Army Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command program analyst Trace Kea, a PGA Professional, explains the benefits of trunk rotation to Spc. Saul Bosquez.



They're happy to be doing something instead of being laid up doing nothing at the hospital."

Kea, a veteran, has missed all but one of his 5-year-old son's soccer games to work on the driving range with the wounded warriors.

"I figured it was the least I could do," he said. "If we all did something like this, life for all the vets returning would be great.

"I went to the prosthetic clinic at Walter Reed one day, and it brings tears to your eyes to see 40 or 50 people going through their drills and their rehab for the day," Kea said.

Sergeant 1st Class Sonia Williams, a human resource specialist with the Defense Logistics Agency at Fort Belvoir, Va., struggles with a recurring hip injury originally sustained during a car accident in 2002.

"We worked out the kinks in my back and neck, but my hip is still off," said Williams, who's been on medical hold since having two screws

inserted in her hip in January of 2006. "I told Jim I was not sure if I would be able to play because of my hip, and he said, 'We can work around your limitations.' So I started coming once or twice a week for lessons. It's very therapeutic for me because it has me focused on other things, not my injury or things going on at home or at the hospital. At Walter Reed, I was diagnosed with depression."

Everything seems to change on the driving range.

"When you look out there, everything is just open, and it just directs your focus elsewhere," said Williams.

Estes began helping wounded warriors get their lives back on course four years ago.

"He's phenomenal with what

he does and how he instructs and motivates and gets these men and women out there to play their best at golf," Kea said. "And their attitudes are phenomenal. They're happy to be alive. They're happy to be here. They enjoy what we're doing for them."

The Disabled Sports USA folks, who have partnered with the PGA of America to support the program, have also taken the wounded warriors white-water rafting, biking, climbing, scuba diving and skiing, among other activities.

Estes said the organization would not exist without gracious contributors, adding the nonprofit he founded and online contributions cover the costs of equipment, lessons, facility fees and time with golf professionals.

For more information about the Salute Military Golf Association visit [www.golfsalute.org](http://www.golfsalute.org), or call (301) 802-5215. **sm**

Tim Hipps works for FMWRC Public Affairs





# MOUNTAIN BIKER

## ROLLING STRONG

By Krista Brown

**F**OR Spc. Michael A. Kurpil, the words “Army Strong” have special meaning. Kurpil is the first mountain bike racer to be sponsored by the U.S. Army.

A New York resident, Kurpil moved to Denver to advance his civilian career as an architect, but quickly discovered that bicycling in Colorado is much more than an outdoor activity; it’s a lifestyle.

“A co-worker and ex-mountain bike racer asked me if I’d be interested in competing in a race with him one weekend. I used to race BMX in New York when I was younger, and thought that mountain bike racing could be somewhat similar, so I agreed to race. We trained for about two months, and in the first race I did pretty well, so I decided to continue racing for the season.”

To train up for races, Kurpil rides almost every day and has also road-bicycled such events as the Triple Bypass (120 miles over three mountain passes, 10,500-foot elevation gain to a height of 12,000 feet above sea level), the Good Samaritan Bike Jam (60 miles), and has previously ridden the New York Century (100 miles through all five boroughs of New York City) and the New York MS Ride event (60 miles, partially on the New York State Thruway), as well as various hill climbs in the Rocky Mountains.

For the 2007 race season, Kurpil came in third overall in one race series, sixth overall in another race series, and has also competed in several independent races. The top three overall in each class are automatically advanced to the next skill level for the following season, which means longer distances, more technical courses, and tougher competition. Kurpil

Spc. Michael A. Kurpil prepares for a downhill run during a 2008 race. He is currently the only Army-sponsored mountain bike racer. (All photos courtesy of Kurpil)



advanced to the higher class for 2008. "A race 'series' consists of consecutive races throughout the season run by a single organization. Some races are in the same town with different courses, and others are all around western Colorado and as far as Angel Fire, N.M."

For the 2008 race season, Kurpil has trained under Nat Ross, four-time, pro- world champion endurance racer and the top 24-hour endurance racer in the world. Nat even lent Kurpil his personal bike for one of his races. For 2008, Kurpil came in 17th out of 94 overall in one series as well as competing in several independent races.

"A typical mountain bike race here in Colorado consists of up to 650 racers, with course distances ranging from 5.3 miles (a hill climb with a 2,062 feet gain up to an elevation of 11,142 feet), to 100 miles in length." Kurpil also attended the Twelve Hours of Snowmass, a 12-hour



(Top) Mountain bikers prepare for a race during the 2008 season. Spc. Michael A. Kurpil is among the racers. (Bottom) Kurpil and Lance Armstrong ride side by side at the "Twelve Hours of Snowmass" race in Snowmass, Colo. Kurpil's "Army Strong" uniform was modeled after Armstrong's.



Spc. Michael A. Kurpil brakes around a turn at the "King of the Rockies" race in August.





Spc. Michael A. Kurpil leans into a turn during a Colorado race.

endurance race with big names like Dave Weins, Max Taam, and seven time Tour de France winner, Lance Armstrong.

"During the course of this past season, I've been offered sponsorships by various race teams, but it's the greatest honor to represent the U.S. Army and wear the Army colors to races. Everywhere I go at races, people shake my hand and thank me for my service to the country. I think it's of utmost importance to get the Army presence out to every aspect of peoples' daily lives, so they can realize support and acceptance, and

see that Soldiers are people, just like them."

Kurpil served for three years on active duty as a combat engineer, with duty stations at Fort Lewis, Wash., Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., Fort Polk, La., Fort Riley, Kan., and Camp Castle, Korea; as well as being in the Army Reserves for two years. He is currently a combat engineer in the U.S. Army Reserve with Headquarters and Services Company, 244th Engineer Battalion, in Denver.

Sergeant 1st Class Gavino Barron, station commander of the Lakewood, Colo. U.S. Army Recruiting Station,

is the point of contact for the support of Kurpil. "Spc. Kurpil is an amazing man and I hope that more people in this country would follow his lead and be as dedicated as he is. Spc. Kurpil is highly respected in the mountain biking community, and in fact, is the first mountain bike racer sponsored by the Army. He's also very modest about inquiring the Army for funding of his sport. It's mostly his income and effort that pay for his mountain bikes, entrance fees, training and races."

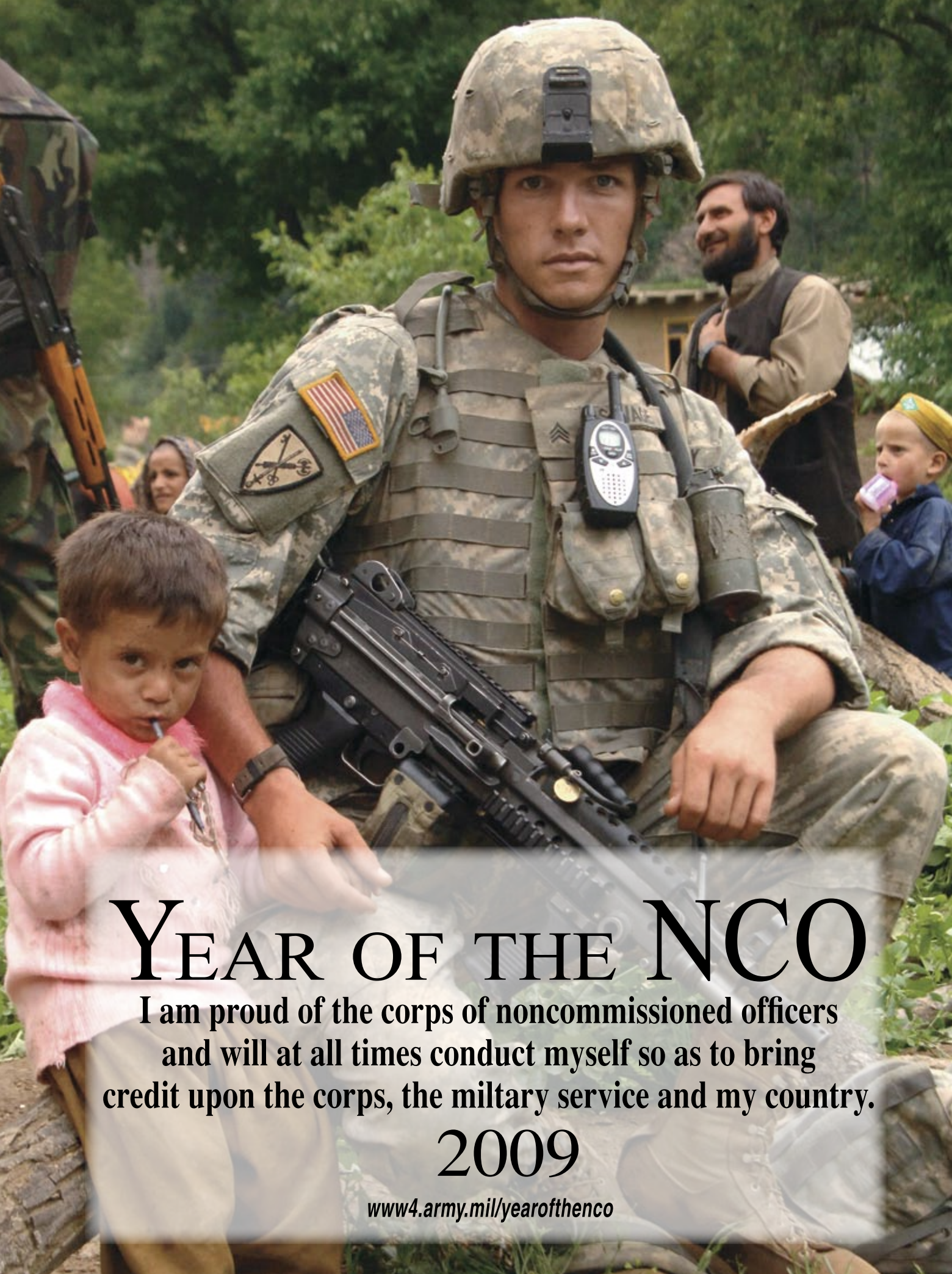
In October 2008, Kurpil flew to New York to do a publicity race for a non-profit organization known as "Libertybiketrail.org." LBT's purpose is to raise public awareness of the health benefits of bicycling as well as getting elementary- and high school-aged kids to participate in charitable community events. "I'm glad to be able to bring the Army to the children and to make them see that bicycling can be fun and healthy, as well as beneficial to the community," said Kurpil.

Staff Sgt. Gerald McDonough of the Monticello, N.Y., recruiting station and some new recruits also supported Kurpil at the race with a table and unlimited information to prospective recruits about the Army. "Spc. Kurpil was a great inspiration to the public and a great guy with a big heart. He shows a true passion for the United States Army. His love of the sport is very apparent, and he is not a man who is a quitter," said McDonough.

For the 2009 race season, Kurpil plans on training by racing cyclocross (a new sport with road bicycles fitted with knobby tires ridden over rough terrain, including snow and ice), as well as getting a new full-suspension race bike. He's also staying in the same race class for '09 with plans to kick the rankings up a few notches over last season. "One of the biggest honors I can experience is representing the U.S. Army at races, and I'm truly thankful that I have the privilege of being a Soldier." **sm**

Krista Brown is a freelance writer from Colorado. This story was printed with her permission.





# YEAR OF THE NCO

**I am proud of the corps of noncommissioned officers  
and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring  
credit upon the corps, the military service and my country.**

## 2009

[www4.army.mil/yearofthenco](http://www4.army.mil/yearofthenco)





Members of the Missing Parts in Action Team of amputees from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas, start the 24th running of the Army Ten-Miler, Oct. 5, at the Pentagon.

# Missing Parts inspires elite runners

Story & photos by Tim Hipps

**B**RAZILIAN Army Pvt. Reginaldo Campos Jr. won the men's division and Veena Reddy of Centreville, Va., led the women in the 24th running of the Army Ten-Miler, which started and ended at the Pentagon on Oct. 5.

Campos, 21, of Rio de Janeiro, improved upon his second-place finish in 2007 to win the race with a time of 48 minutes, 59 seconds.

Steve Hallinan, 22, of Arlington, Va., was second in 49:12, and was followed by Joseueldo Nascimento, 27, of Rio de Janeiro, in 49:12; All-Army team member 1st Lt. Philip Sakala, 25, of Fort Carson, Colo., in 49:45;

and 2007 Army Ten-Miler champion Jose Ferreira, 32, of Rio de Janeiro, in 50:03.

Reddy, 29, won the women's race with a time of 58:08, and was followed by Mesert Kotu, 26, of Ethiopia, in 58:45; Gabriela Trana, 28, of Costa Rica, in 59:08; All-Army Capt. Mickey Kelly, 30, of Fort Carson, in 59:29; and Capt. Emily Potter, 29, of Alexandria, Va., in 59:40.

Jason Clark of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., won the wheelchair division with a time of 1 hour, 1 minute, 26 seconds. Hope Galley of Falls Church, Va., led the women's wheelchairs in 1:03:31.

The true "rabbits" on this pic-

ture-perfect day for road racing, however, were the Missing Parts in Action competitors from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., and Brooke Army Medical Center in Fort Sam Houston, Texas—physically challenged Soldiers who got a 10-minute head start and motivated the elite runners to work harder.

Several of the front-runners in America's largest 10-mile road race shared encouraging words and gestures as they passed the wounded warriors and wheelchair competitors, many of whom sacrificed at war to help protect their freedom.

"Something like this really puts in





Veena Reddy of Centreville, Va., wins the women's division of the 24th running of the Army Ten-Miler with a time of 58 minutes, 8 seconds, Oct. 5, at the Pentagon.

# in Action Team in Army Ten-Miler

context what we're doing in the States and overseas with all of our Soldiers, just seeing all of the wounded warriors out there," Sakala said. "I've had two really good buddies pass away – one in Iraqi Freedom and one in Afghanistan. When I'm feeling bad (on the run) and I look over and see these guys doing this—some running on one leg and even some double-amputees—that makes me want to go harder and makes me want to do well.

"I've got Army on my chest and those guys show what we're doing. It takes you back a little bit. I was going back-and-forth and back-and-forth with a guy in a chair. It just makes

me really proud to be an American Soldier and very proud of what I'm doing right now.

"It really put into context how awesome this event is."

Sakala unsuccessfully competed for a berth on Team USA for the 2008 Olympics as a member of the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program. He recently was released from the program and reported to Fort Bragg, N.C. After completing Army Airborne Jump School at Fort Benning, Ga., he likely will deploy to help fight the war on terror.

On this day, Sakala, a 2006 graduate of the United States Military

Academy at West Point, N.Y., set the pace for the lead pack through five miles before relinquishing the lead to members of the Brazilian Army Team during the sixth mile.

"When the first Brazilian came, my legs were shot," admitted Sakala, a 1,500-meter specialist who regrouped and battled gamely to finish fourth. "I was just hanging on after that, but that was my personal record for 10 miles. I thought three miles was long, but all things considered, I was really happy going under 50 minutes."

Campos, who ran on Sakala's shoulder for the first five miles, made





Hope Galley of Falls Church, Va., wins the women's wheelchair division of the 24th running of the Army Ten-Miler with a time of 1 hour, 3 minutes, 31 seconds, Oct. 5, at the Pentagon.



a strong surge during the sixth mile and quickly opened a 25-meter lead.

Brazilian Army Maj. Gen. Cesar Zambao said his team was invited to compete in the Army Ten-Miler for the first time last year. After his runners finished 1-2-3-4-6 in 2007 and claimed four of the top nine spots in the 2008 event, he said they plan to make the trip an annual tradition.

Second-place finisher Hallinan, a 2008 graduate of American University who works at the Gotta Run Running Shop at Pentagon Row, passed four runners in the final four miles, including two in the last two.

Reddy made her winning move

during the eighth mile and Kelly, a former modern pentathlete in the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program, reported to Fort Riley, Kan., in December and is training for a deployment to Iraq.

"I'm ready for something different," Kelly said. "I'm ready for a change of pace."

Kelly, who improved her personal-best 10-mile time by 40 seconds, hopes to eventually return to WCAP to train for the 10,000 meters or marathon. She also hopes to run the 2009 Armed Forces Cross Country Championships before deploying.

As excited as she was about run-

ning her personal-best time, Kelly was equally eager to salute the Missing Parts in Action Team.

"You know what was awesome? The wounded warriors," she said. "I love them. I was just cheering them the whole way."

"I gain strength from watching their strength. I was yelling for every one of them that I could see because they were running right next to us. And to be running around the monuments with everyone yelling 'Go, Army!' is very special." **sm**

Tim Hipps works for FMWRC Public Affairs



Former U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program modern pentathlete Mickey Kelly (center) of Fort Carson, Colo., is the All-Army Team's first female finisher with a personal-best time of 59 minutes, 29 seconds in the 24th running of the Army Ten-Miler, Oct. 5, at the Pentagon. She finished fourth in the women's division.



Army Ten-Miler leaders Pvt. Reginaldo Campos Jr. of the Brazilian Army (471), U.S. All-Army 1st Lt. Philip Sakala (15) and Brazilian Joseuldo Nascimento (67) close the gap on a member of the Missing Parts in Action team during the 24th running of the Army Ten-Miler, Oct. 5.





(Trying to) catch up with

# 'The Sarge'



For the last five years top fuel driver Tony "The Sarge" Schumacher (top left photo and racing in background) has strapped himself into his 8,000 horsepower, 2,225-pound Army land rocket and roared down the dragways of America, hitting more than 330 mph and running the 1,000-foot track in less than 4 seconds—and he's done it faster, more often than any top fuel pilot on the National Hot Rod Association circuit. The Chicagoan blew out the competition with an overwhelming single-season record of 15 top fuel career victories in 2008, and picked up his fifth consecutive and sixth overall NHRA championship title when he and crew wrapped up the 2008 season in November at Pomona Dragway in California. He also holds the most top fuel career wins at 56. For all that he and the Army team accomplished, the Driver of the Year Foundation selected Schumacher as the 2008 Driver of the Year, becoming only the third NHRA driver to be so honored in the 42-year history of the award. (Photos by J.D. Leipold)





# NASCAR

# ACTION



(Background photo) Driving the No. 8 U.S. Army car, Mark Martin holds off Jeff Gordon (25) in the first Gatorade 125-Mile Qualifying Race for the 2008 Daytona 500 at Daytona International Speedway. (Left photo) Martin focuses on driving the Army No. 8 car in the 2008 running of the first Gatorade 125-Mile Qualifying Race for the 2008 Daytona 500. (Right photo) Dale Earnhardt Jr. drives the No. 88 National Guard/Mountain Dew AMP Chevrolet to victory against Tony Stewart (20), Jeff Gordon (24) and Jimmie Johnson (48) in the 2008 Budweiser Shootout at Daytona. The Budweiser Shootout, NASCAR's season-opening event, will undergo major format changes for the 2009 race, scheduled for Feb. 7. The top six drivers in owner's points for each car manufacturer are eligible for a starting berth. The race distance has increased from 70 to 75 laps. There will also be a 10-minute intermission after 25 laps for teams to change tires, add fuel and make normal chassis adjustments. (Photos by Tim Hipps)





# Soldier earns spot on Team USA

Story & photo by Tim Hipps

**S**ERGEANT 1st Class Dexter Avery has been selected to play for Team USA in the 2009 Border Battle, a slow-pitch softball game between the United States and Canada.

Avery, 38, of Fort Huachuca, Ariz., will be rewarded July 18 for a decade of All-Army Softball excellence during the 4th World Cup of Softball at the Amateur Softball Association's Hall of Fame Complex in Oklahoma City.

"Excitement beyond words," Avery said of being named to the 15-man U.S. roster. "It's just a privilege to be able to move up the ladder from playing backyard ball, to playing organized ball in high school and college, and then get to play on one of the highest levels that softball has to offer.

"In softball, I don't think you can get any higher than this. When you are asked to play with the best players at that level and you get a chance to play with them against guys from another country and you're representing the U.S., I don't think you can get any bigger than that. I'm just ecstatic."

All-Air Force coach Steve "Pup" Shortland of Randolph Air Force Base, Texas, will coach Team USA for the game that will be televised by ESPN.

Avery, an outfielder who hits with power, has maintained a batting average in the .700s while representing Fort Hood, Texas; Yongsan Garrison and Camp Carroll, South Korea; and Fort Huachuca throughout a decade



Ten-time All-Army Softball outfielder Staff Sgt. Dexter Avery digs in against All-Air Force at the Armed Forces Softball Championship Tournament.

of All-Army and All-Armed Forces softball.

He helped All-Army teams win the Armed Forces Championship four times. He was selected eight times for the All-Armed Forces Team that advanced to play in the ASA National Championship Tournament, and he was named to the Armed Forces All-Tourney Team seven times.

Avery, however, does not play softball for accolades, titles or trophies.

"When you love to play the game, most people see that in you," he explained. "And when you respect the game, I think they see that even more."

Championships and kudos, Avery contends, do not rank in the same ballpark as the jokes, the laughter, the heartaches, the pain and the camaraderie derived from competing in military softball tryout camps and tournaments.

"Of all the tournaments I've played in, I think the Armed Forces Tournament is the most nerve-racking," he explained. "My first year in '97, I think that was the most nervous I've ever been to play a game because it's so built up around 'you need to do this, you need to be your best at this, nobody's going to give you nothing and everybody is going to be after you.'"

"And when you get there, that's exactly how it is. Nothing is given to you. You know how it is when you play on the upper level, all those guys want to do pretty much is hit. But on

the Armed Forces level, everybody is playing defense. If you get a hit, you earn it. There is none of that, 'I'm going to let it go through the hole because I don't think I can get to it.'"

Avery, a 6-foot-3-inch, 240-pounder who averages 12-15 homers per tournament, plays left-center field for the All-Army Team and left field for the All-Armed Forces squad. Not gifted with blazing speed for an outfielder, he compensates by getting a good read and jump on the ball. Although not flashy, his arm is solid. And his glove was deemed golden in 1998 by a civilian league in which he played shortstop while stationed at Fort Hood.

"I always gave it everything I had. No matter how tired I was or what was going on, I was always there to win. If we were up 20 runs or down 20 runs, I still maintained the same mentality about the game—and just having that drive to continue to try to get better every year."

A native of Decatur, Ga., Avery played football, basketball and baseball for Monticello High School in Jasper County, Ga. After playing two seasons of basketball at Patrick Henry State Junior College in Monroeville, Ala., he played two seasons of baseball at Columbus State University. He then served three years as athletic director for the Boys & Girls Club of America in Columbus, Ga., before enlisting in the Army. **sm**

Tim Hipps works for FMWRC Public Affairs





# Black Knights

(Top photo) The West Point Corps of Cadets marches onto Lincoln Financial Field before the start of the Army-Navy Football game in Philadelphia, Dec. 6, 2008. The march-on is a long-standing tradition and takes place before the two sister academies square off on the gridiron. Navy defeated the Black Knights this year in what is arguably college football's greatest rivalry. (Below) The Army defense tackles Navy running back Bobby Doyle. (Photos by John Pellino)





Spc. Jake Lowery and his grandmother's horse, Zipper, survey the competition while awaiting their turn in a Troy Shelley Affiliate team roping event, May 10, at Denny Calhoun Arena in Las Cruces, N.M.



# Wounded warriors *saddle up*

Story & photos by Tim Hipps

**P**URPLE Heart recipient Spc. Jake Lowery officially launched the U.S. Army Wounded Warrior Sports Program with an inspirational team-roping performance at Denny Calhoun Arena in Las Cruces, N.M., in May.

Lowery, 26, of Fort Richardson, Alaska, lost his right eye and sustained massive head injuries when he was hit by an improvised explosive device that killed a fellow Soldier in Fallujah, Iraq, on Feb. 11, 2007.

Less than a year later, Lowery, a lifelong cowboy, was back aboard a horse and roping steers despite suffering from a traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder.

"This pretty much keeps me going—it's the only thing that does," he said. "Without it, I'd just be hanging out in my room somewhere."

The Wounded Warrior Sports Program was designed to give active-duty Soldiers with life-altering

injuries an opportunity to compete in sporting events by paying for their athletic attire, registration fees, transportation, lodging and per diem.

Lowery traveled from Alaska to El Paso, Texas, and connected with family for a ride home to Silver City, N.M., where he, stepfather John Escobedo and grandfather Pete Escobedo loaded a trailer with horses and drove to Las Cruces for a weekend of roping.

All three competed in the Troy Shelley Affiliate event.

"This is one of the best things the Armed Forces could have done because it's just therapy for these guys who feel like 'I lost this. I lost that,'" said retired Sgt. 1st Class Pete Escobedo, 83, who served 27 years in the Army. "If you really want to do something with yourself ... Jacob is a prime example. He's really trying."

"We're thankful for the Army for doing everything it can for him."

Lowery teamed with different partners to successfully rope two of six steers in the first round of compe-







Spc. Jake Lowery gives chase aboard Zipper during a Troy Shelley Affiliate team-roping event, May 10, at Denny Calhoun Arena in Las Cruces, N.M.

tition on Saturday. After roping two more in the second round and another in the third, he was sitting in third place entering the final short round. But when prize money came into play, his steer got away.

"It looked good to me," Lowery said of his final toss. "I'm not sure how he got out of it. I guess it happens that way sometimes, especially in this sport. Maybe I roped him a little too low. If not, I don't know."

Despite struggling with limited depth perception, Lowery is encouraged that his roping skills will continue to improve. He already bounced back to win an all-around crown in Alaska and teamed with his stepfather to capture the team-roping title at the Professional Armed Forces Rodeo Association's 2007 World Finals in Fort Worth, Texas.

"I just keep practicing and hope it eventually comes back," Lowery said.

Lowery's first run of 8.43 seconds was one of the fastest of the morning among 450 cowboys in Las Cruces. He posted another quality time of 8.69.

"Yeah, it was good, but it could have been better," he said of the full

day of roping. "It was awesome just to come down and get out of the cold weather for a while."

Pete has faith that Jake eventually will overcome TBI and PTSD. Putting him on a horse is the best therapy he knows.

"I have been roping with Jacob since he was knee high to a grasshopper," Granddad said. "I just don't have words to explain the love that we have for Jacob and how much we enjoy ourselves doing what we do. He's worked very hard. I'm sorry that he had to be injured the way that he was, but we're doing the best that we can."

"He has taken his injury and forgotten it, to a degree, while he is doing what he loves the most. If you go to our house, this is all you'll find: horses and cattle. If we're not roping today, we're roping tomorrow."

On this weekend, they were roping both days—three generations of cowboys taking turns roping steers in 100-degree desert heat.

"Jake has done remarkably well in coping with his injury," Pete said. "Instead of saying: 'Well, I'm injured,' he says: 'I'm going to do what I can. The Good Lord handed me this

hand, so I'm going to do with what he dealt me the best that I can.'"

John, too, is proud of how Jake has dealt with adversity, but he's also experienced the aftereffects firsthand.

"Sometimes he gets those debilitating headaches and they just knock him smooth out," John said. "And then he just doesn't feel like doing anything. And if he does feel like it, his head is hurting so bad that he's not able to. There's a lot of stuff in your head after you go to war and get blown up that you just can't throw away. Me, I don't have a clue because I've never been, but I can just imagine."

"A good friend of mine was a Navy SEAL in Vietnam and he got blown up big-time, and the guy's got the best attitude of anybody I ever met."

"Jake wasn't hit for 10 minutes and he was on the phone asking: 'What can I do?'" John said. "We got him cycled through (the recovery process) and once he started getting right, he called me up and said: 'It's not the events in your life that matter; it's what you do with those events. If you want to lie around and be a crybaby, be a crybaby. If you want to





Spc. Jake Lowery (right) and his stepfather, John Escobedo, watch competitors while awaiting their turns in the Troy Shelley Affiliate team-roping event, May 10, at Denny Calhoun Arena in Las Cruces, N.M. Grandfather Pete Escobedo (white mustache) looms in the backdrop. All three competed in the event.

jump up and do something ...”

That call made John proud.

“I told him before he left: ‘When you sign (enlistment papers with the Army), I can’t come and get you.’ And he said: ‘I ain’t worried.’ He’s never regretted his decision to go, not at all. He’s never got on the ‘Poor me, I wish I hadn’t’ and stuff like that. We hand him a lot and don’t give him the opportunity to lie around and have his own personal pity party. It’s like: ‘Hey, get up, let’s go do something.’”

Then another curious moment comes along.

“At the world finals last year, he was sitting up at the top of the coliseum by himself,” John recalled. “He just couldn’t stand the confinement of having people all around him. It’s just the little things, like he’ll forget to shut the gate (after riding the horse through).”

The affects also can be seen in Jake’s prolonged moments of silence.

“If we can ever get him to where he’ll just start talking again and intermingling with people and not being paranoid, I think life will be good,” John said. “When he’s on horseback or working out, he’s a

normal guy. But we’ll be sitting at the house watching TV or something and it ain’t the same guy. We drove six- or seven-hundred miles to the world finals—14 hours of drive time—and he probably said three words.

“But you stick him on a horse or in the gym, where his comfort zone is, and he’s fine.”

At age 83, Pete derives inspiration from his injured grandson.

“His motivation is the love for this sport, and that keeps him wanting to get better instead of finding excuses as to why he can’t do something,” he said. “He’s finding ways and reasons to do whatever he can. We really don’t worry too much about him, especially when we see how he’s progressing and conducting himself with his injury. He’s just not letting it get him down.”

Jake believes that sets him apart from some of his fellow injured

troops, whom he says “don’t seem to want to do anything.” He couldn’t wait to get active again.

“Some of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation people told me about it when I was at the warrior transition unit,” Lowery said of the Wounded Warrior Sports Program. “About two days later, I sent in the paperwork. I sent them about four or five events they could pick from.”

“This was the perfect venue for this particular guy,” said Army sports specialist Mark Dunivan, who expects more applicants to follow. “I have been contacted by an amputee who wants to run in the USA Triathlon Physically Challenged National Championships in New York in July. I think it’s just a matter of getting the word out a little bit more.”

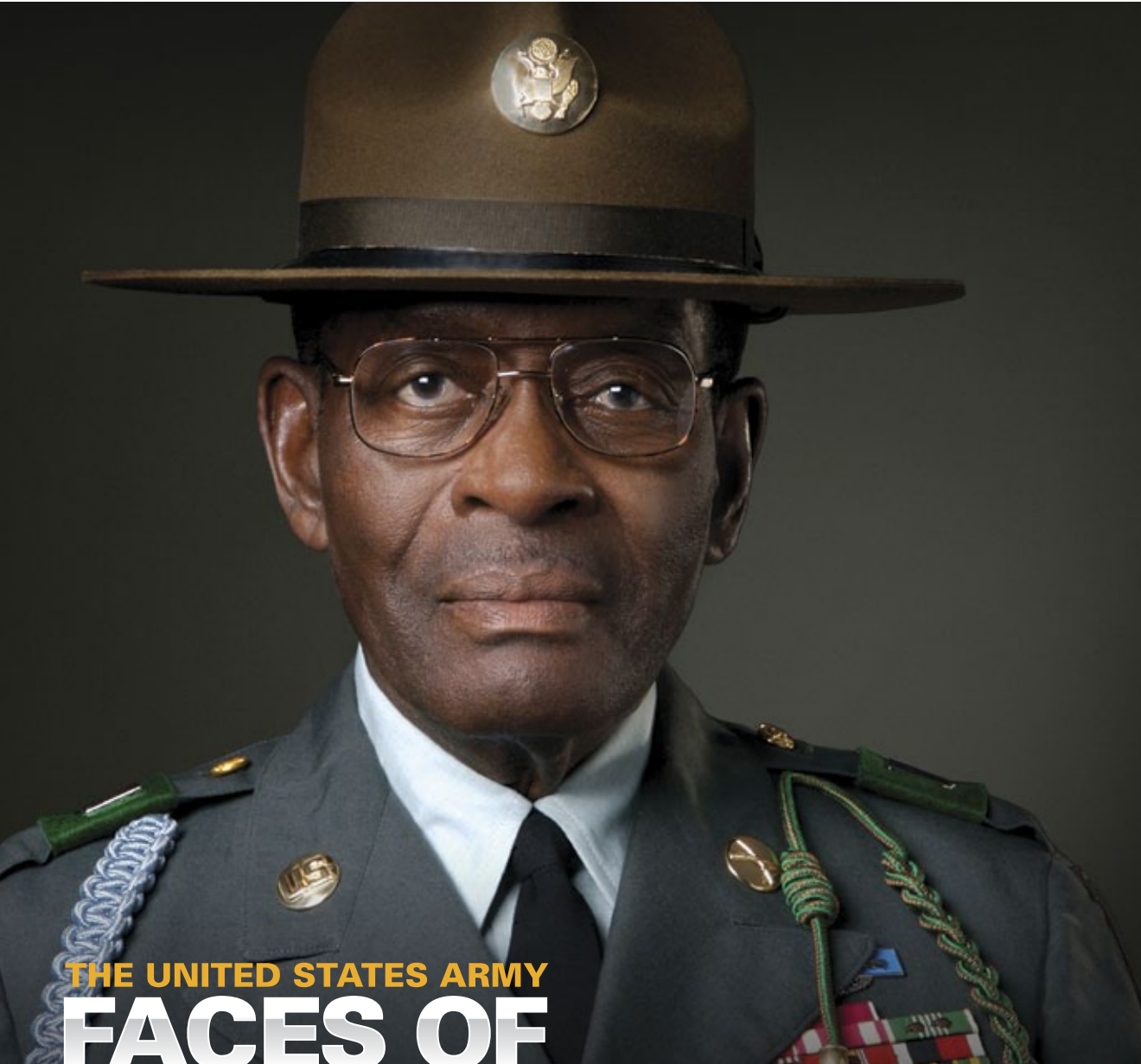
Instructions for the application process to participate in the Wounded Warrior Sports Program are at [www.armymwr.com](http://www.armymwr.com). For details, contact Dunivan at [mark.dunivan@us.army](mailto:mark.dunivan@us.army) or 719-526-3908 or Peggy Hutchinson at [peggy.hutchinson@us.army](mailto:peggy.hutchinson@us.army) or 703-681-7211. **sm**



Tim Hipps works for FMWRC Public Affairs



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### CSM George G. Terry, Retired

As a member of the 28th Infantry Regiment, The Black Lions, during the Vietnam War, CSM George G. Terry selflessly served his Nation front and center. Twenty-five years later, he continues to do just that. Living just off base, CSM Terry attends all events on the installation, big and small. Demonstrating a

mixture of humility and pride, he not only serves as a role model to today's Soldiers, but also acts as an inspiration to us all regarding the importance of Army history, tradition and above all, values. Is it any wonder that CSM George G. Terry continues his role as Honorary Sergeant Major of the Black Lions?

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# Frontline sports







(Clockwise from upper left) Iraqi soldiers compete against U.S. Soldiers from Multi-National Division – Baghdad, northwest of Baghdad, July 4, 2008. (Photo by Pfc. Lyndsey R. Dransfield)

Spc. Steve Stewart, 10th Mountain Division, shows Iraqi teens how to play foosball in the town of Muhallah, Sept. 28, 2008. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian D. Lehnhardt)

Soldiers play in a three-on-three basketball tournament at Camp Eggers in Kabul, Afghanistan, July 4, 2008. (Photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Shawn Graham)

Soldiers from the 4th Infantry Division play flag football at Forward Operating Base War Eagle, Iraq, Sept. 20, 2008. (Photo by Sgt. Jerry Saslav)



# Frontline sports







(Clockwise from upper left) Sgt. 1st Class David Richardson, 10th Mountain Division, hands out soccer balls to children in Baghdad. (Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andrew M. Rodier)

Soldiers from 1st Cavalry Division play soccer with Iraqi soldiers at Contingency Operations Base Adler, Oct. 23, 2008. (Photo by Maj. Jesse Henderson)


Soldiers from the 27th Infantry Regiment run in a steeple chase event at Joint Security Station Sheik Amir, northwest of Baghdad, July 4, 2008. (Photo by Pfc. Lyndsey Dransfield)

Soldiers from the 87th Infantry and member of the Sons of Iraq enjoy camaraderie after a soccer match in Riyadh, June 16, 2008. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Margaret C. Nelson)



# ARMED FORCES BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Story & photos by Tim Hipps

A close-up photograph of a basketball player's hand touching a basketball on a court. The hand is positioned at the bottom of the frame, with the index finger pointing upwards towards the bottom of the basketball. The basketball is a standard orange color with black lines. The background is a light blue basketball court with yellow and blue lines visible.

**S**ERGEANT Ron Bartley had 40 points and eight rebounds to lead the All-Army men's team to a 95-93 overtime victory over All-Air Force in the 2008 Armed Forces Men's Basketball Championships in Fort Indiantown Gap, Pa.

Bartley shot 12-of-23 from the field, including 8-of-16 on 3-pointers, and had four assists and three steals in the Soldiers' best performance of the double-round-robin tournament played March 21-27 at Blue Mountain Sports Arena.

Second Lt. Matt Bell scored 21 points and Spc. Brett Thomas of Fort Huachuca, Ariz., added 10 points for All-Army. Warrant Officer Aaron Stuart of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, had eight points and a team-high 14 rebounds.

Bell, 23, a four-year starter for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., was named to the Armed Forces All-Tournament team after averaging 23.8 points, 4.3 rebounds and 2.6 assists for All-Army (2-4), which finished fourth in the tournament against squads from the Air Force (5-1), Navy (3-3) and Marine Corps (2-4).

Bartley's hot hand kept the Soldiers in the first half of their second





(Left) 2nd Lt. Marshall Jackson drives to the basket against an All-Navy defender. (Center) Spc. Brett Thomas drives for two of his 10 points during All-Army's 95-93 overtime victory over All-Air Force. (Right) Petty Officer 3rd Class Leo Barnwell blocks the shot of 2nd Lt. Matt Bell, a recent four-year starter at the U.S. Military Academy during All-Navy's 82-74 victory over All-Army.

meeting with Air Force.

"That's the man, right there," Bartley said of Bell. "Last game he had about 40, so I knew they were going to key on him. Coach let us have a spread offense and let the guards do their thing. I got a little hot and caught on fire and rolled with that."

Bartley's 3-pointer from the corner, his fifth of the first half, gave Army a 36-29 lead and the Soldiers led 40-31 at halftime.

"In the first half, I was missing everything," Bell said. "Ron just got hot. He had his breakout game. We rode him the entire first half and a lot of the second half, too. He was hitting unbelievable shots.

"I just tried to keep my head in it and when I got an open shot, I was going to try to knock it down, but he controlled the tempo of the game and put us on a huge run to get the lead in

the first half."

Bartley made another 3-pointer to open the second half. His eighth and final 3-pointer gave Army a 58-46 lead with 13:43 remaining.

"When I got tired, Matt picked it up, and that was it," said Bartley, 31, of Fort Carson, Colo.

From there, Bell made three 3-pointers and three free throws as Army tried to thwart Air Force's final run. But the Airmen would not go away and the Soldiers missed 10 free throws in the final 2 minutes.

After Staff Sgt. Bernard James of Beale Air Force Base, Calif., made a layup that knotted the score at 87 with 10 seconds left, Bell missed a 3-point attempt as the horn sounded ending regulation.

Thomas scored three points in overtime and 2nd Lt. Marshall Jackson of Fort Benning, Ga., made a free

throw with 17 seconds left that sealed the victory.

"Yeah, we almost lost it there at the end of regulation, but that says a lot about our team," Bell said. "We missed a ton of free throws and they tied the game up and forced it into overtime. We could have just folded, especially against Air Force, who had a better record. But our guys picked it up in overtime and we were able to pull it out."

Bell, Bartley and 2nd Lt. Robert Moore of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, were named to the 2008 All-Armed Forces Team.

Moore, who did not play in Army's overtime victory over Air Force, averaged 12.6 points and 6.4 rebounds during the Armed Forces tournament. **sm**

Tim Hipps works for FMWRC Public Affairs





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- Must be taken OF a Soldier, BY a Soldier
- Submission deadline: April 21, 2009
- Only one photo submission per Soldier
- Photograph must be high resolution (Three mega pixels or greater in size)
- Need photographers's full contact information, including unit address, supervisor's telephone number and personal telephone

- Images should be composed vertically, and action should be directed to the right
- A detailed caption must accompany the photo; full names; ranks and units of Soldiers in the photo (if children are depicted, no names required); and nomenclature of any vehicles or equipment pictured

Email your photos (and any questions) to: [carrie.mcleroy@us.army.mil](mailto:carrie.mcleroy@us.army.mil)



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